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Issue 7 | September 2007

HGZine

Free Magazine For Handheld Gamers. Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates...

THE BIG GRAPPLE!

SmackDown vs Raw 2008

Exclusive shots and interview inside



The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass

Read the definitive review



Syphon Filter: Logan's Shadow

Gabe's best adventure yet?



PLUS!

We ♥ PSP
Why we love Sony's
handheld heartthrob



FULL REVIEWS!



DS

Dead 'n' Furious

Exploding zombies!



PSP

Final Armada

The alien invasion starts here...



PSP

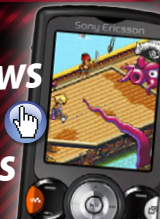
Drill Dozer

Why you need this game



PLUS!

News and reviews
of the latest
mobile games



Welcome to HGZine



Hello, and welcome to another action-packed edition of HGZine magazine. You may have noticed that the editor's face and name has changed this month, but I promise that's all that's changed. We've still got the hottest games for you, the sharpest writers and the same exclusive interactive content that you've come to know and love.

Take this issue, for example. Not only have we got an exclusive interview with the team behind *WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2008*, one of the biggest games of the year, but we're proud to also be able to bring you an in-depth review of *Zelda*, previews of *SOCOM* and *Syphon Filter* on PSP and much more. And don't forget to send in your feedback, as we genuinely love to hear what you think of the mag. Enjoy.

Dean Mortlock, Editor
HGZine@gamerzines.com

READER FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of the new issue!

MEET THE TEAM

They play games for a living. Envy them if you will



Gary Cutlack
Gary has no love for Power Rangers, but is fond of war.
PLAYING THIS MONTH: Glory Days 2



Kath Brice
Kath's fallen in love with a young man called Link.
PLAYING THIS MONTH: Zelda: Phantom Hourglass



Mark Walbank
Never challenge this man's gaming knowledge. You'll lose.
PLAYING THIS MONTH: Drill Dozer



Chris Schilling
Our busy scribe defends the humble PSP this issue.
PLAYING THIS MONTH: Contra 4



Dave Harrison
Peaceful Dave takes out his frustrations on the undead.
PLAYING THIS MONTH: Dead 'n' Furious

DON'T MISS!
This month's highlights

WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2008

MASSIVE 4 PAGE FEATURE
Let's get ready to rumble! PAGE 14



Feature: Portable Gold
In defence of the PSP P26



Syphon Filter: LS
Logan comes out of the dark P21

Zelda: PH

The definitive review P28



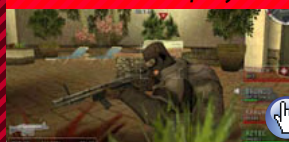
God of War: COO

PSP perfection? P3



SOCOM TS

The art of four-play P19



QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away!

SONY PSP

God of War:
Chains of Olympus
WWE: SmackDown vs Raw 2008
SOCOM Tactical Strike
Syphon Filter:
Logan's Shadow
Castlevania:
The Dracula X Chronicles
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GAMEBOY ADVANCE

Drill Dozer

MOBILE PHONE

News
Reviews



PSP

**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to
tell us what
you think of
God of War!

Did we say one screen-filling
boss? Sorry, we meant two.
Fortunately this ogre is a bit
dim, and easily clobbered by
our muscular protagonist

"Kratos also has a
couple of nifty new
moves to play with"

The PSP version doesn't skimp on the
gore, with some skull-crushing special
moves spraying crimson all over the shop

**ACTION-PACKED
TRAILER**
Click below to see
Kratos in action!



IF LOOKS COULD KILL
Then we'd all be corpses by now...

With the game out of the hands of original creator David Jaffe – and after the miracles performed by Cory Balrog for the even-better sequel – some were worried when development was passed to Ready At Dawn. But just have a gawp at this trailer (above) and realise what a fantastic job they've done on the PSP. This is envelope-pushing, jaw-slackening stuff.

God of War: Chains of Olympus

**LATEST
NEWS**

Kratos returns on PSP, and he's looking as good as ever

What's the story?

Taking place before the events of *God of War*, this portable prequel details anti-hero Kratos' crusades for the Gods – he's seeking absolution for being conned into murdering his wife and child. So expect the usual gory retelling of Greek mythology, complete with awe-inspiring set-pieces and brutal action.

What do we know?

One thing we know is that it looks amazing. The opening section certainly makes sure *Chains of Olympus* lives up to the impossibly high standard set by the previous two *God of War* games, flinging around enemies with gay abandon and ramping up the excitement with a screen-filling lizard boss.

It's just as cinematic as the PS2 versions too, and its slightly more muted visual palette – dark yellows and greys, with a vivid scarlet for the bloodletting – seems to have taken a leaf from the book of filmic blockbuster *300*.

The controls work perfectly, too. With no right analogue stick, the dodge move requires a squeeze of both shoulder buttons, which becomes second nature after a while. Kratos also has a couple of nifty new moves to play with, including a twisting whirlwind move that looks incredibly cool.

When do we get more?

Keep everything crossed for a pre-Christmas treat on your PlayStation Portable. It's due to hit US PSPs in the autumn, so with any luck Santa might just be slotting this neatly into your Yuletide stockings.

Anything else to declare?

Did we say it looks amazing? There might be a small price to pay for the PS2-rivalling graphics though, with the one slight niggle in this early build being the occasionally choppy framerate. With *Daxter* developer Ready At Dawn handling the game though, we have every confidence that this won't be an issue in the finished product.

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PSP
PlayStation Portable

NINTENDO DS

TEAM 17

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Single player video



[REPLAY THIS VIDEO](#)



Multiplayer video



[REPLAY THIS VIDEO](#)

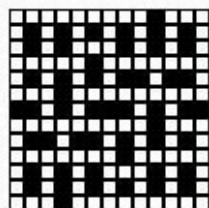
Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Nintendo
Heritage: Brain Training,
Super Mario series
Link: No link available yet
ETA: Q4 2007

PARADISES. And the long word
going down is ARMADILLOS.
Does that count as a spoiler?

It's very basic-looking but
that fits the style of game,
as we're not so sure about
NYT's flashier, more
colourful visuals

By our reckoning, there should be
at least 1,200 puzzles in the game.
No doubt you'll be playing well into
2009 to finish the lot

Medium Puzzle #78
13x13

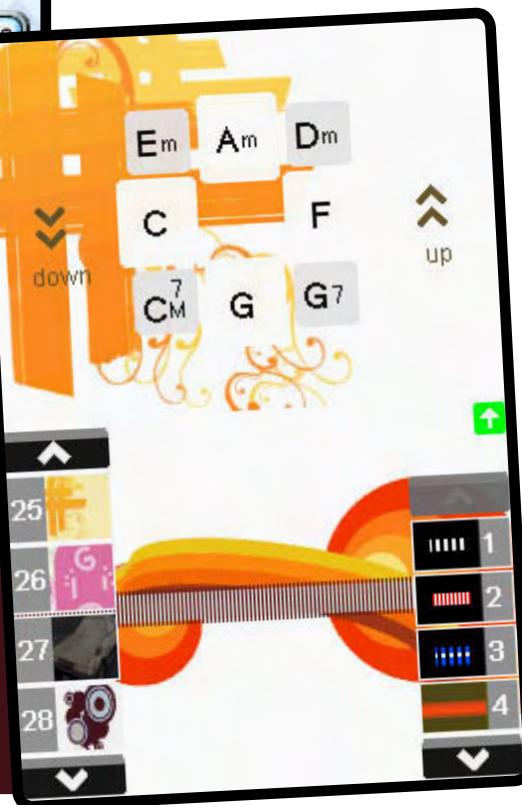


NEW PUZZLE
5 Hints Available

WHEN IS A GAME NOT A GAME?

The DS goes casual

The rise of the casual game is approaching phenomenon status. Recently, a third of the top 30 titles in Japan were games containing the words 'brain' or 'training'. Our picks from the forthcoming glut are vision trainer *Flash Focus*, and Ubisoft's guitar-strummer *Jam Sessions*. We've played (and enjoyed) both, so watch out for them.



Nintendo Crossword

LATEST
NEWS

"This could snare
a sizeable portion
of the Touch
Generations crowd"

*Remember crosswords? They're
like Sudoku, only with letters*

What's the story?

Clearly Nintendo don't feel that they've taken over quite enough of the world yet, so they're here to empty even more wallets with another puzzler. *Nintendo Crossword* (working title) was quietly announced at the recent E3 show, and is set for a late 2007 release.

What do we know?

In truth, not an awful lot. For some strange reason, Nintendo didn't make a big deal of this at either their press conference or on the show floor – the game was tucked away like an embarrassing relative shunted into the cupboard under the stairs. Strange, as they spent a good deal of time talking about casual titles and non-games, and this fits that particular bill perfectly.

It's not as if it appears to be lacking in quality, either. From what we've seen, the handwriting recognition looks responsive, and there are a wide range of puzzles, from the busier American-style grids to the black square-ridden crosswords more familiar to UK tabloid readers. DS owners in the US are already catered for with *New York Times Crosswords*, but marketed well this could snare a sizeable portion of the Touch Generations crowd over here.

When do we get more?

Fingers crossed, we should get this before Christmas. Although, with the hefty number of puzzles requiring translation into several European languages, don't be surprised if this slips to the beginning of next year.

Anything else to declare?

It has a clean look that's less showy than the *NYT* game, but which should appeal to those who liked *Brain Training*, with some satisfying bloops and bleeps when you fill in the answers. In fact, the method for inputting letters looks remarkably similar to the Sudoku sections in the two *Kawashima* titles.

DS

MARIO PARTY DS

Publisher: Nintendo

Developer: Nintendo

Heritage: Animal Crossing:

Wild World, New Super

Mario Bros

Link: No link available yet

ETA: Christmas 2007

The top screen is mainly used as a map, but we've seen one or two games where it has more of a noticeable effect on proceedings

Single-party multiplayer is a generous addition, but will you have three friends with DS's who want to play?

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of Mario Party!

"There's one game where a Shy Guy makes a giant kebab"

PARTIED OUT?

Can Mario Party work on the DS?

The one major problem we can foresee with *Mario Party DS* is the difficulty in getting four players together to play a board game on a handheld. It's one thing to have an evening in with *Mario Party 8* on the Wii, but a more limited yet equally lengthy portable game just won't work. Short but sweet is the key, but we think Nintendo will already be more than aware of that.

Tapping the stylus rapidly to get the longest pencil lead? Genius. We suspect that there will be plenty of original games like this

Mario Party DS

LATEST NEWS

It's Nintendo's party and they'll try if they want to

What's the story?

Mario Party was an incredibly fun and addictive multiplayer N64 game from Hudson Soft. Nintendo liked it, so they asked Hudson to make more. Seven more. Seven more that were exactly the same as the first game.

What do we know?

We know that Nintendo have wrested the reins from Hudson for this one, but it certainly can't be down to weak sales of *Mario Party 8* on Wii, as it's been a huge success for Nintendo and Hudson. Perhaps they're more concerned about quality for the tubby one's dual-screened bow.

From what we've been shown there looks to be a healthy mix of button-mashing mini-games and stylus-controlled fun, with a Goomba-catching task which looks frantic and a chase sequence which will wear the letters away from your DS's buttons. Further predictions: the CPU opponents cheat, take ages over their turns and there's an ice-block punching mini-game. Call us cynical, but the single-player game is likely to be a sideshow to the Wi-Fi multiplayer. On the other hand, if anyone can revitalise the series, it's Nintendo themselves.

When do we get more?

We'd be very surprised if it's not released just in time for Christmas. 'Quarter 4 2007' is about all we have for now, besides these new screenshots.

Anything else to declare?

The visuals haven't taken much of a hit from the (admittedly pretty functional) Wii graphics, and it seems to move a little swifter than the console versions. Otherwise it's business as usual, with several wacky boards and sixty to eighty mini-games.

In the plus column, the multiplayer only requires one person to own the game. And there's a game where a Shy Guy makes a giant kebab, which suggests there won't be a lack of imagination.



DS



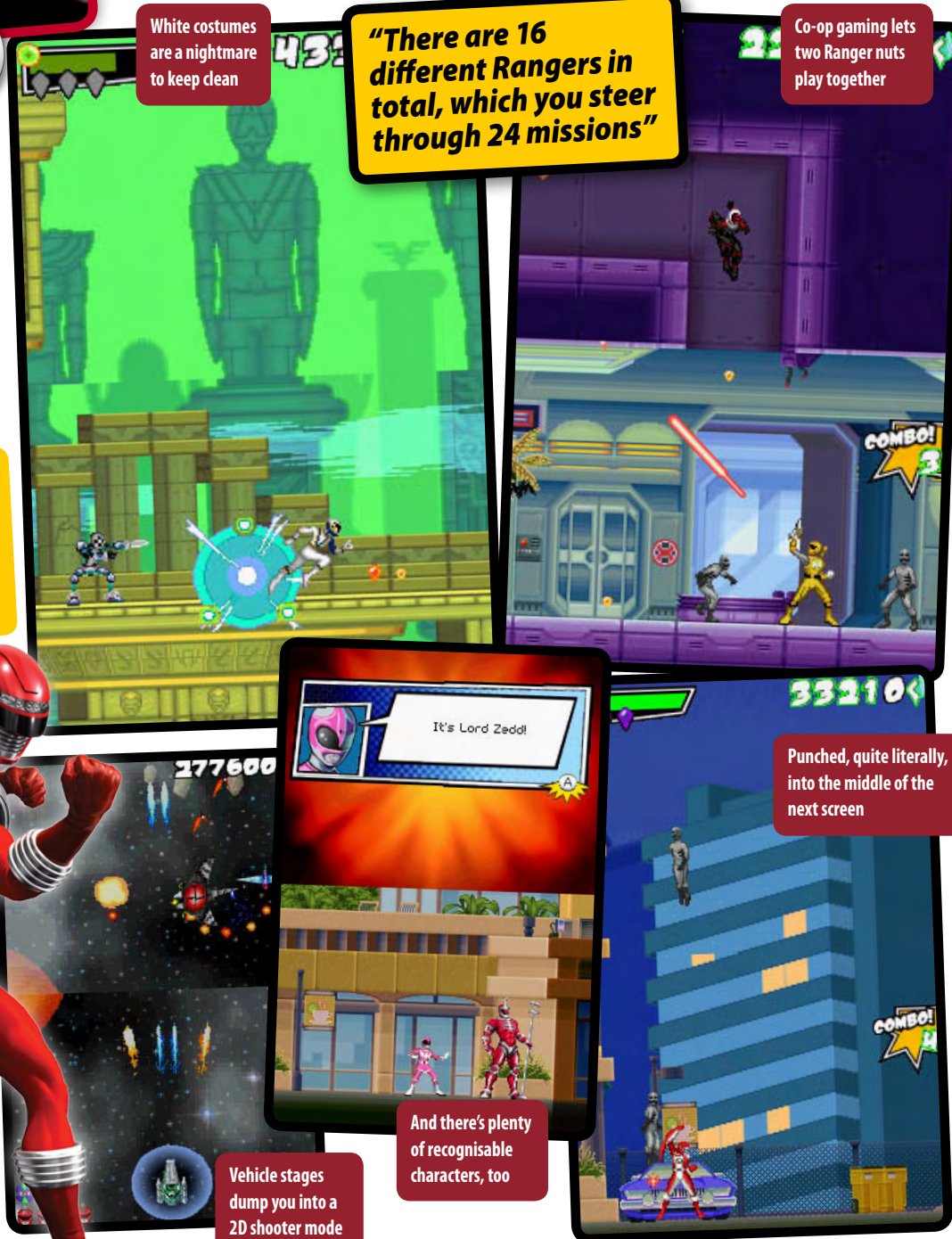
Publisher: Disney
Developer: Handheld Games
Heritage: Phil of the Future, That's So Raven
Link: <http://disney.go.com/disneyinteractivestudios>
ETA: October

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of Power Rangers!

White costumes are a nightmare to keep clean

"There are 16 different Rangers in total, which you steer through 24 missions"

Co-op gaming lets two Ranger nuts play together



Power Rangers: Super Legends

LATEST NEWS

15 years of tight costumes come together in one huge, time-travelling Power Rangers extravaganza

What's the story?

Yes, it's a collection of mini-games, as seems compulsory for most DS titles these days. *Power Rangers: Super Legends* uses the mini-game format to good effect though, zapping you about the *Power Rangers* timeline to let you play as various members of the Ranger team from across nearly 15 years of shows.

You start off as the stars of the Mighty Morphin' shows, moving through to the current Operation Overdrive team. Which, if you're a kid or have managed to avoid turning into a boring adult who only watches News 24, is good news.

What do we know?

There are 16 different Rangers in total, which you steer through 24 missions. Missions like 2D scrolling shooting games, platform jumping bits, or one-on-one fights with some of the series' finest robotic dinosaur enemies. The DS stylus is used to launch special finishing moves – no doubt accompanied by loads of sparks and ludicrously poor Japanese heavy metal.

When do we get more?

You want more? Fear not, as it's widely believed that *Power Rangers: Super Legends* should make a dramatic arrival (complete with over-the-top explosions and men in rubber lizard suits, probably) in the shops this October.

Anything else to declare?

The fights use both DS screens, with players able to smash an enemy up in the air and see his broken body fly up into the top screen. Or you might find yourself climbing through mazes to get through the slightly simple-looking exploration sections. Basically, the game manages to tick all the genre boxes.

Super Legends also lets you play cooperatively with a friend, which the makers claim is 'showcasing the teamwork of the *Power Ranger* series'. All that and a moral at the end, too. Nice.

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GAMESPY

9.1 OUT OF **10**
IGN

9.0 OUT OF **10**
PRO-G

9.0 OUT OF **10**
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UBISOFT

PSP

Incoming

Coming soon to your handheld

Monster Hunter: Freedom 2

Publisher: Capcom | ETA: September 2007

While it didn't make great waves over here, the original *Monster Hunter* was a massive success in Japan selling over 2.5 million units. This sequel includes more creatures, locations and multiplayer modes. While you can happily go gallivanting on your own the community aspects of the game are impressive, with up to four players going head-to-head or cooperatively over the PSP's infrastructure mode. Downloadable content plus vast customisation features should ensure this is a monster success.



Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Heroes

Publisher: Namco Bandai | ETA: September 2007

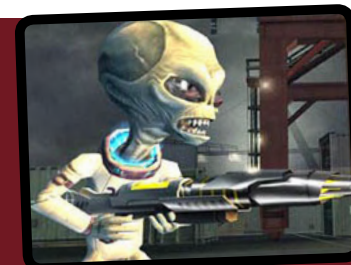
Created exclusively for US and European audiences, this latest Namco Bandai beat-'em-up is based on the popular *Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Heroes* anime series. The twist is that you can enter into three-on-three battles with special attacks and moves unlocked depending on the formation of characters you choose. Visually the game is stunning, with the backgrounds and cel-shaded characters standing out for particular note. Wi-Fi modes – including the ability to swap your profile with friends – make us optimistic that this could be a cracker.



Destroy All Humans! Big Willy Unleashed

Publisher: THQ | ETA: Q1 2008

This PSP instalment of the Greys versus Humans franchise serves as a prequel to *Path of Furon* – due out on Xbox 360 and PS3 early next year. You play Crypto, a Furon alien travelling the Earth in the 1970s and determined to wipe out the human race. With a host of supercharged alien weaponry, a UFO and the titular Big Willy (a kind of robot mech) he's certainly got the arsenal. And if it contains the humour of the original then we'll be queuing up to climb on board.



Medal of Honor Heroes 2

Publisher: EA | ETA: Christmas 2007

Heroes 2 is a sequel to last year's very admirable effort, but this time sees you infiltrating Normandy from behind enemy lines as OSS

Operative John Berg. Technically and visually it's got all EA's might behind it so we're expecting great things, especially in the multiplayer stakes, as the game will support 32-player battles over the PSP's infrastructure mode. It also has a much beefier single-player campaign, so we fully expect this to give Sony's forthcoming *SOCOM* game a bit of competition.



Hellboy: The Science of Evil

Publisher: Konami | ETA: September 2007

Developed to tie-in with the forthcoming movie, *Hellboy: The Science of Evil* sees the popular comic book hero taking on his nemesis, Hermon Von Klempt, in a bid to prevent the resurrection of the Nazi party. Which, as quests go, is a pretty admirable one. It's shaping up to be another third-person brawler, but the ability to use Hellboy's Right Hand of Doom to pummel enemies could be fun. With voice acting direct from the movie and some snappy dialogue we're quietly looking forward to this one.



ROUGH CUTS

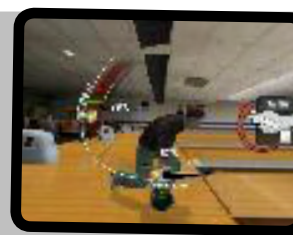
More PSP games...



Brunswick Pro Bowling

Publisher: Crave | ETA: August 2007

Brunswick is the Adidas of Tenpin Bowling and they've clubbed together with Crave to bring a realistic bowling simulation to PSP. Ten official tournament venues have been recreated for the game and players will be able to move through the amateur ranks right up to professional level. A realistic physics model is said to recreate the sport like never before, right down to the squeak of the shoes on finely veneered floors. We hope this is a turkey, but for all the right reasons.

COMING
SOON

Alien Syndrome (September 7)... Dungeons & Dragons Tactics (September 14)... Sega Rally (September)... Silent Hill Origins (October)... Hard Rock Casino (October)...

The Simpsons (October)... Guitar Hits 2006 (October)... Final Fantasy Tactics: The War of the Lions (October)... Star Wars: Force Unleashed (November)... The Golden Compass (December)...

DS

INCOMING

Coming to a dualscreen near you!

Flash Focus: Vision Training in Minutes a Day

Publisher: Nintendo | ETA: October

Not content with increasing your brain power, Nintendo is now on a quest to improve your vision and hand-eye coordination. *Vision Training* contains 10 skill tests designed to keep the optician at bay, including baseball, matching symbols and tapping ping-pong balls over a net.



Orcs & Elves

Publisher: EA

ETA: Autumn

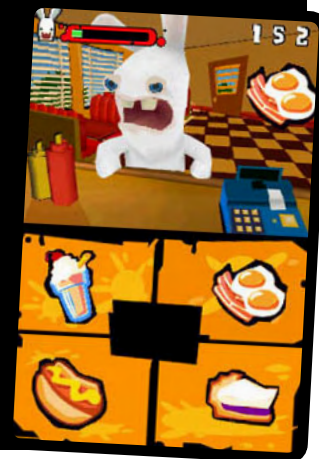
This may not seem immediately interesting, but a story-based RPG developed by *Doom 3* maker id Software is well worth checking out. Already a huge success on mobile handsets, the format is getting overhauled for DS and will include better graphics, more items and monsters, bigger levels and enough first-person action and spellcasting to encourage *Dungeons & Dragons* fans to discard their polyhedral dice forever. Probably the only id game that doesn't come with an 18 certificate.



Rayman Raving Rabbids 2

Publisher: Ubisoft | ETA: November

The French are very good at surreal games, and although the original *Raving Rabbids* was a pretty traditional platformer, it certainly packed in the humour. This sequel is concentrating on mini-games and looks far better for it. There will be 36 in total, including conducting a neural biopsy on a Rabbid, taking a group of them to McRabbids for fast food and competing in rhythm-action music games. Customising your very own Rabbid plus the option of uploading your high scores to a leaderboard should ensure that this is a rare success.



ROUGH CUTS

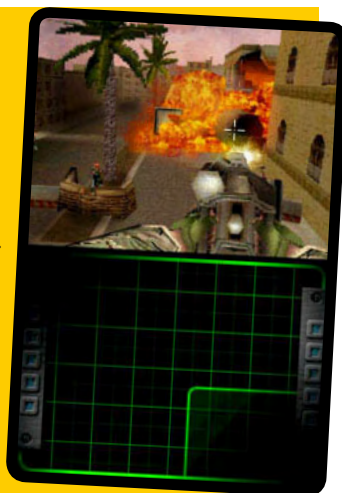
More DS games...



Call of Duty 4

Publisher: Activision | ETA: Autumn

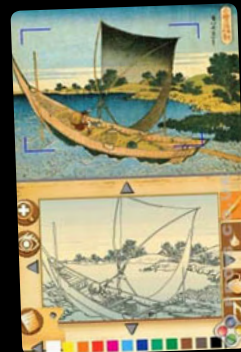
Metroid aside there are no good first-person shooters on the DS, so we're really excited by this prospect. Screenshots already show *Duty 4*'s diversity, with players able to charge around on foot or attack from inside a Humvee or an AC130 Gunship. Activision reckon it'll be every bit as playable as the home console versions and will include mortars raining down, lightning strikes, tanks bursting through walls and rocking cargo ships.



Paint by DS

Publisher: Mercury Games | ETA: August

Some might think it's about as entertaining as watching paint dry but to us there's something very appealing about reproducing great works of art on the humble DS. Along with a suite of mini-games there's also a paint-by-numbers mode which allows you to reproduce masterpieces by the likes of Cezanne and Monet. At £20 this will be a flea in the ear for Van Gogh purists (the right ear, obviously).



Jam Sessions

Publisher: Ubisoft | ETA: September

We recently had a little tinkle on this and we already like what we hear. At its heart, the game lets you compose and play your own songs by strumming the stylus across the screen while your thumb chooses chords on the D-pad. Special effects can be layered on too, like reverb, tremolo and other filtered sounds. While Training and Free Play modes ease you in, there's also a Performance mode with 20 songs for you to follow. Already this is shaping up to be a key autumn release.



COMING
SOON

Madden NFL 2008 (August 24)... Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Ring of Fate (August)... Chibi-Robo: Park Patrol (September 29)... Need For Speed: ProStreet (October 31)... Geometry Wars: Galaxies (October)... Thrillville: Off the Rails (October)... Front Mission DS (October)... Heroes of Mana (November)... Mario Party DS (November 19)

**IT'S ALL ABOUT...
TO START**



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ON MOBILE...

Crimsonland:
Mobile Massacre

Publisher: HeroCraft | ETA: September

The info we have on this mobile conversion of the PC shooter claims the game has 'shocking music'. Which would be some admission, until we saw descriptions of 'infuriated spiderlords', 'madness action' and, of course, a 'pyramid of crushed spawns'. Funny language mishaps aside, the PC game was surprisingly addictive and this portable version should have the same allure.

Geometry Wars:
Retro Evolved Mobile

Publisher: Sony BMG Music Entertainment | ETA: Out now

Best. Mobile. News. Ever. The terrifyingly addictive 360 blaster Geometry Wars makes it to mobile, taking a hit in the looks department, but missing none of the original's frantic gameplay. While we have qualms about the size of the display, the controls have been well thought out, and a series of new gameplay modes add significant value.

The Simpsons:
Minutes to Meltdown

Publisher: EA | ETA: Out now

No doubt released to coincide with the recent *Simpsons* movie, *Minutes to Meltdown* is a pseudo-isometric adventure for EA that's already available to download from the usual places. Rather than a straight tie-in, this is an original game developed completely separately from the forthcoming home console titles, as you control Homer as he blunders his way towards stopping a meltdown at the nuclear powerplant. Promising 'laugh out loud sound effects', this looks a little more interesting than your average tie-in.

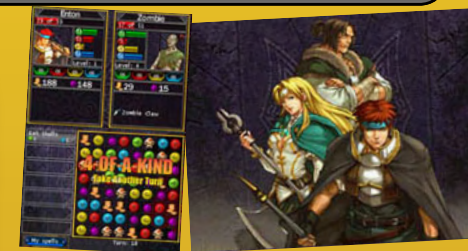


AquaPhone

Publisher: Dynamic Pixels
ETA: TBA

Bored of your Facebook aquarium? Then we think that Dynamic Pixels' *AquaPhone* might be just up your, er, fishtank. With over 200,000 downloads in its native Russia since its release last year, this *Tamagotchi*-esque sim clearly has a lot of fans.

Rather than just watching your creatures swim about aimlessly, there's a whole ecosystem to manage, and you can eat, fight and breed to your heart's content. Ah, if only real life was like that...

Puzzle Quest:
Challenge of
the Warlords

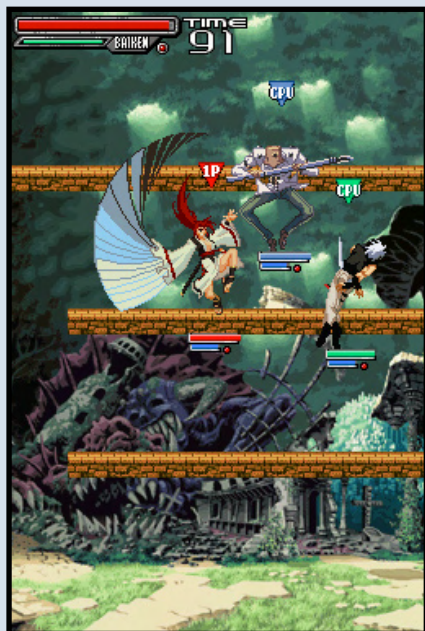
Publisher: THQ Inc | ETA: TBA

Vague release dates – we hate 'em. One thing we don't hate though is the news that DS mega-hit *Puzzle Quest* is wending its puzzle-cum-RPG way to a phone near you. The game should reach mobiles pretty much unchanged, and its compulsive play, coupled with its intriguing story, is a blend too potent to ignore.

Advanced
Karpov 3D
ChessPublisher: Hudson Soft |
ETA: TBA

Irritatingly non-specific release details aside, this good-looking chess sim from Hudson (of *Bomberman* fame) is ideal for those who know their knights from their rooks. With fully-rotatable 3D boards and a curious Watch mode allowing you to view a CPU-only game (to pick up a few tips, obviously) this should be a cerebral treat, especially in the head-to-head multiplayer.





Double the Fury

Guilty Gear JUDGEMENT

Guilty Gear DUST STRIKERS














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PSP

FIRST LOOK

WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008

We pin down developer Yuke's for a look at the handheld versions

The *SmackDown vs. Raw* franchise is one that's had more success in its home console iterations than its handheld brethren. With absolutely crippling load times, the 2006 PSP game just wasn't well suited to a portable experience, even though it played as a fair tribute to its PS2 cousin. Things improved slightly the following

year, although the brilliant save-transfer feature – which allowed you to take your PS2 wrestlers on the move – was inexplicably removed. Having said that, the core grappling action was just as enjoyable on the PSP, and though it lapsed into button-mashing at times, it was a satisfying portable brawler.

**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
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you think of
SmackDown!

There's an impressive roster of wrestlers, including the likes of *Raw*'s Carlito as well as a number of ECW stars

"Yuke's has completely revamped the series for PSP, while the DS gets its first *SmackDown* title"

Not content with resting on its laurels and bashing out a barely improved update for this latest release, developer Yuke's has completely revamped the series for PSP, while the DS gets its first *SmackDown* title – with coding duties passed to Amaze Entertainment. We've an interview with Amaze's Creative Manager, Tony Sharma, about that game in a couple of pages, so for now we're concentrating on the new and improved, all-singing, all-dancing PSP version of the game.

Fighting in style

For starters, there are now eight different Superstar Fighting Styles, with the roster of official wrestlers split into

these different categories according to their capabilities in the real world. So Rey Mysterio will be a high flyer, while if you're more into powerhouse moves, the likes of Batista would be a better choice. There are also submission artists, hardcore fighters, brawlers, technical experts, showmen and – our favourite – dirty wrestlers. If you prefer

Mr. Kennedy carries the rather ancient Ric Flair on his shoulders – with more moves available than ever, there's a wealth of ways to defeat your rivals

The character models aren't quite as impressive as their PS2 counterparts, but they're very well animated



PSP

SMACK
DOWN
2008

"There's also a new mode called WWE 24/7"



The dirtier grapplers will be able to use chairs in the ring to beat their opponents

White wristbands are making a comeback this year.



>WWE continued

an unfair fight, then this latter category will allow you to bend and break the rules in a number of interesting ways.

Each class has its own special moves, while the new struggle submission system sees you applying pressure to your opponent, not by hammering away at buttons but by nudging the analogue nub – with the intensity of the hold dependent on how far you push it either way. So you can go for a longer hold with less pressure to tire your opponent out, or a more powerful hold which might make them tap out. All the while, your rival will be struggling against you, with the improved animation giving some impressive visual feedback – far better than an intrusive HUD.

Also new this year is the addition of the Extreme Championship Wrestling brand – which should bring the total number of brawlers over the half-century mark – as well as adding some more weapons specific to the ECW series and a brand new set of arenas to wrestle in.

Second life

There's also a new mode named WWE 24/7, which will allow you to live the life of your favourite Superstar on a daily basis. This takes in numerous career storylines, statistical updates as you progress through training, and signing autographs for WWE supporters, as well as the traditional management options available in the past – the ultimate goal of this mode is to be inducted into the WWE Hall of Fame, which should take quite some time.

The PSP version falls between the more sim-like new generation versions on Xbox 360 and PS3, and the more arcade-style scrapping of the Wii and DS games, which should make it equally accessible to hardcore wrestling fans and casual players alike.

We've not tested the online mode as yet, but Yuke's has promised a bewildering array of match types and more comprehensive customisation options than ever before. And loading times have been cut right down, especially on the new PSP Slim and Lite, so *SmackDown* fans can get into the action a lot quicker. We'd have liked more time with the game, but from



everything we've seen there's plenty to get franchise fans whooping with delight. A far cry from the standard yearly update, *WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2008* promises the best PSP wrestling game yet seen. We can't wait. ●

Jeff Hardy gets caught in a hold – the strength of the hold is affected by your control of the PSP's analogue nub, rather than any button pressing

PSP

HGZine

SMACK
DOWN
2008

HOW COMPLETE?

75%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

90%

Grapple fans should start to get excited

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Fighting talk...

Amaze Entertainment are the folks busy working on the DS version of WWE SmackDown vs Raw. We caught up with Creative Manager Tony Sharma for an exclusive interview to ask him about the first WWE game to hit Nintendo's handheld.

This is the first official SmackDown vs Raw game on DS, so does that add pressure to developing the game for such a unique handheld format?

I don't know if you'd call it pressure, but we felt like making a wrestling game on the DS was uncharted territory for the most part. In the end, we're confident we are really making the best of the unique features that have made the DS the number-one selling videogame system in the world. We know WWE fans and DS fans are going to get really excited about what we have in store for them.

With the DS being relatively underpowered in comparison to the PSP, does that make the SmackDown experience difficult to translate? What do you think are the main differences between the two versions?

The DS has a lot of features that the PSP does not, and we're using these to our advantage to create a completely new game experience that will be fresh, fun and exciting for DS fans and WWE fans. We built the DS title from the ground up, so fans can expect a completely different experience from this title from any of the other SmackDown vs Raw versions. From combat to season mode, everything is fresh and new.

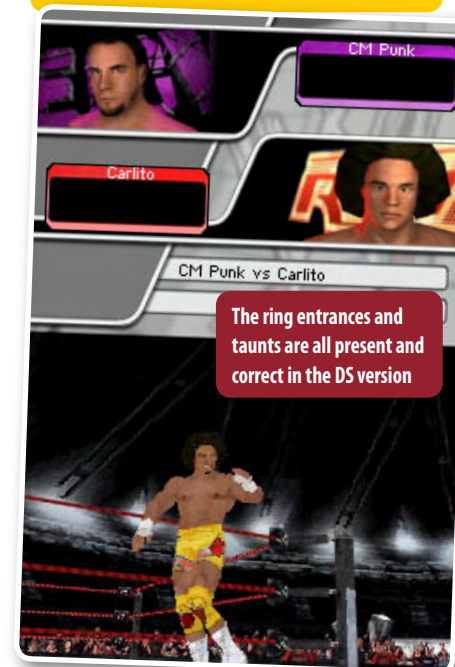
How do you feel that the game compares with its home console counterparts? The previous iterations of the game were criticised slightly for long load times – is that something you've tried to resolve?

Since the DS does not use a disc, load times are negligible to non-existent. I also want to stress that from start to finish it is a completely different experience than the PSP, and also the main consoles for that matter.

The DS version is said to offer a completely different gameplay experience, including touchscreen control over Superstars. Can you tell us more about the controls?

We went all-out for the DS and made it 100 per cent touchscreen controlled. Every move you perform will be done through representative stylus actions that mirror what the Superstars are actually doing onscreen. If you are in a situation where you can perform a suplex, you'd drag up repeatedly to set up the opponent, then drag down to

"We know WWE fans and DS fans are going to get really excited"



slam the opponent into the mat. If you are going to perform a wicked elbow strike with Undertaker, you spin to wind up and then drag forward to unleash it.

There's a strong Extreme Championship Wrestling presence in the game, including a variety of Superstars, arenas and weapons. Can you tell us a little more about what that means for the game?

On the DS, the roster includes ECW Superstars and we even have a unique ECW storyline that players can

> Interview continued

participate in. Their hardcore presence can be felt all throughout the game. They shook the WWE, and they will shake things up on the DS.

The game is said to be packed with significant updates which have been requested by fans; it seems

like this is more than just an incremental update. With that in mind, is fan feedback important in shaping the development of the SmackDown franchise?

We always listen to our fans. We consider fan feedback when deciding upon our roster and how our season mode will play out. Since this is our first outing on the DS, we're eager to hear what the fans have to say once

they get their hands on this exciting new way to play.

Can you tell us a little bit more about the situation-based fighting featured in the game, or the series of unique holds that the DS version is said to feature?

In any given situation, we worked hard to determine which actions players would want to be able to perform. This

"We have a Season mode that is completely new to the DS version of the game"

way, players always have dynamic and fun moves to do. Whether you're on the offense or defense, you always have options available, so there is never a dull moment.

Are there any other features you can tell us about?

Yes. We have a robust Season mode that is completely new to the DS version of the game – the DS version of SmackDown spans a full year of WWE action. Players can rise through the ranks and jump from brand to brand, including ECW! Making allies, training your Superstar... it's all here.

This is just one more reason for players who pick up WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2008 for the Xbox 360, for example, to definitely check out the DS game as well.

Finally, what are your personal favourite elements of the games, and are there any secrets you've not told anyone else about yet?

I love the touchscreen controls, as they really give the feeling of performing the move and you get to take part in the action instead of just pressing a button. We feel that we're really giving WWE fans and DS owners something to get excited about. There really is no other game quite like this one. As for secrets, rest assured we'll be revealing more in the coming months... ●

CM Punk gets drop-kicked by Carlito – the DS version looks surprisingly close to the PSP game

This shot might seem unsuitable for a family magazine, but we're assured he is wearing pants

Amaze Entertainment have really pushed the DS's technical capabilities – the wrestlers are just as recognisable here as in other versions



**WWE SMACKDOWN
VS RAW 2008**
Publisher: THQ
Developer: Yuke's
ETA: November

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**To know the road ahead,
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PSP

HANDS ON

SOCOM Tactical Strike

Let's lock and load, soldier

The *SOCOM* franchise is well established as the one to beat in the area of tactical shoot-'em-ups. This latest addition plans to cement that reputation even further, as not only do you still get the opportunity to blow the bejesus out of anyone stupid enough to wander in

front of your highly skilled crosshairs, but new tactical elements should bring a depth to the gameplay that we've yet seen in the series.

Developed in association with the US Naval Special Warfare Command, *Tactical Strike* now gives you the chance to fight as one of nine special forces from around the world in either a lengthy single-player mode or by connecting up to three other players for Ad Hoc or online Infrastructure play – complete with voice chat if you already own a headset. Although we will forgive you if you don't want to use the headset, as it can be quite embarrassing to shout "Go on my son, kill the £^%\$&^£!" on a crowded train station. Or at least it was for us.

For the first time in a portable *SOCOM* game you now have the opportunity to control an entire team of four soldiers at once, barking virtual orders to either individual team members, a smaller splinter group or the whole team at once. An intuitive control system has been created, so that issuing commands to your team is both quick and straightforward.

Fear not if you're not lucky enough to have an army of PSP-owning *SOCOM*

"Tactical Strike gives you the chance to fight as one of nine special forces"

fans at your disposal though, as the developer, Slant Six Games has been considerate enough to include a detailed single-player campaign based in Panama. If it's as enjoyable as previous single-player outings, then this campaign on its own should be more than enough to warrant checking out the game. ●

The graphics are stunning throughout and help to add to the game's atmosphere

Flicking between your various team mates in now a breeze

This isn't a full-on shooter though, so you will need to approach your targets with care

If you've got a wireless connection, then online *SOCOM* play is hard to beat

GANG OF FOUR

How to squeeze four soldiers into a PSP

Controlling up to four characters simultaneously on a PSP could be a finger-bending nightmare of astronomical proportions, but early reports seem to suggest that Slant Six Games has come up with an ingenious control method that allows you to keep everything moving remarkably smoothly as you switch between your team mates. We're looking forward to putting it through its paces when we get the game in for review in our next issue.

PSP

HGZine

SOCOM
Tactical Strike

HOW COMPLETE?

85%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

90%

This could easily be the best *SOCOM* on PSP so far

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PSP

HANDS ON

Syphon Filter: Logan's Shadow

Gabe Logan emerges from the darkness once more

The PSP is a console which has suffered more than its fair share of dodgy ports. For every *Loco Roco* there's five or more titles which have been transposed from the PlayStation 2, and saddled with an uncomfortable control system, borne from the handheld's lack of a right analogue stick. If the PSP's ever had a bad press, then it's mostly thanks to lazy developers failing to make the very most of the system.

That's an accusation that certainly couldn't be levelled at developers Sony Bend when *Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror* was released on PSP last September. An action-strategy title clearly geared towards portable play, *Dark Mirror* was a PSP exclusive that showed all of the strengths of the handheld, with none of its usual camera-based weaknesses.

With a tightly-plotted storyline, a terrific audio-visual treatment, and some superb level design, it remains one of the premier titles on the console.

In fact, it was such a success that a PlayStation 2 release of it is planned for the fourth quarter of this year.

So it's with great excitement that we can bring you the first shots of the forthcoming sequel, *Logan's Shadow*. Despite only a year between the release of the original, it seems that Sony Bend has spent the time productively, introducing a raft of new features to supplement the potent blend of action and stealth that made the first game so compulsive.

Veteran graphic novelist Greg Rucka has penned the story, a plot surrounding the hijacking of some dangerous new technology by an extremist group. It may sound a little unoriginal, but the beauty of the storyline in the original was how brilliantly it was told, with expertly-directed cut-scenes, and some effective voice acting. Added drama should be provided with some all-new 'interactive moments' (*God of War*-style reaction

"Added drama should be provided with some all-new 'interactive moments'"

An enemy unwisely uses a zipline within plain sight of Logan. You can use them yourself too, and even shoot enemies while sliding down them. Brilliant

It's no surprise to see Sony Bend include a blind-fire option, as every game is doing it these days, from *GRAV* to *Rainbow Six*

The underwater controls are surprisingly simple. So many games seem to struggle with swimming sections, but everything is totally smooth and effective here



PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!
Click here to
tell us what
you think of
Syphon Filter!

PSP

>Syphon Filter continued

tests to you or me) while the hypnotic music is provided by Iranian musician Azam Ali, whose work includes films like *The Matrix Revolutions* and *300*.

The gameplay has had a few minor tweaks, too. Logan can now use blind-fire (like *Gears of War*) to send enemies scurrying for cover, or even use his foes as human shields. With several stages containing underwater sections, Logan can now engage his enemy while submerged – like a more violent Jacques Cousteau – with a bolt pistol and spear gun. Meanwhile the Havok physics engine will ensure realistic-looking deaths for all those terrorists you shoot.

There's also a variety of new methods to dispatch your foes – the sequel's enhanced arsenal contains weapons

"Logan can now engage his enemy while submerged, with a bolt pistol and spear gun"

like grenade launchers, smoke grenades and sticky bombs. Or, if you'd rather disorientate your enemy than destroy them, flash bangs might be more up your street. The popular buddy missions from the first game also make a return, but here they've been improved, with a series of brand new missions available.

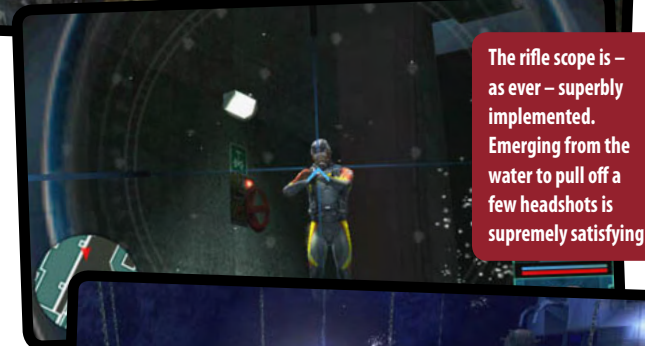
The multiplayer component, which was a big part of the original's appeal, has been bolstered by four-on-four modes, with all the original *Dark Mirror* maps also available and tweaked to better suit the revamped gameplay here. The underwater combat from the



Artificial intelligence is generally above average, although you will get the odd enemy wandering into your line of fire

main game will also be available as a multiplayer option, while unlockables will include skins and other items which can be downloaded direct from the game's website to your PSP. A very nice touch indeed.

From what we've seen so far, *Logan's Shadow* is looking very impressive. There's nothing here that's any great advance on the first *Syphon Filter* game on PSP, but considering how good that was, that's fine by us. After all, a slight improvement on one of the finest games on PSP will result in... well, another of the finest games on PSP. Roll on October. ●



The rifle scope is – as ever – superbly implemented. Emerging from the water to pull off a few headshots is supremely satisfying



One early mission has you disabling mines around a shipwreck to allow a fellow diver to salvage some important intel

More base jumping than you might expect.



HOW COMPLETE?

90%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

90%

Improved sequel to a PSP classic – an absolute must



DS

HANDS ON

Contra 4

The world's hardest game series returns on DS

With so many great titles in a variety of genres, it's surprising that the DS hasn't really had a classic 2D scrolling shooter as yet. Platformers, action-adventures, puzzlers, strategy games, RPGs... you name it, Nintendo's handheld wonder has it. But in terms of old-school run-and-gunners there's nothing. Not a bean.

Except now it has. A bean, that is. Lance Bean to be exact, and his faithful comrade-in-arms, Bill Rizer – the original

Contra team, tooled up and ready to deal death and suffer it repeatedly themselves. Yes, that's right, the two Eighties commandos (based on Stallone's *Rambo* and Schwarzenegger's Predator-killer Dutch Schaefer, if you didn't know) are back in business on a Nintendo console and riding the coat tails of *Contra III* and its successful stint on the Wii.

Taking place two years after the events of *Contra III*, another alien force is trying to destroy our planet. Cue our two grizzled veterans, plus new Mercs Scorpion and Mad Dog to repel the invading ETs by any means necessary. Which, as any *Contra* expert knows, means guns. Lots of guns.

With the action now taking place over two screens, Konami are really talking up the boss scraps. Always tricky, now Rizer and Bean will have to use their new grappling hook to swing between both displays to try and take down the massive enemies. From what we've seen, WayForward have set a blistering pace for the action, which will

It's unclear how WayForward will deal with the gap between the two screens, but we're hopeful it won't affect the gameplay too much

Contra can be incredibly unforgiving. There's none of this life-bar business here – one hit and you're dead

"From what we've seen, the developers have set a blistering pace for the action"

please fans of the originals, while the series' legendary toughness remains. Oh, and there's a co-op mode, too.

It's refreshing to see such a hardcore approach on a console known for attracting new players, and anyone who's found most of the DS library too easy will be in heaven. There might be a bit of a wait for *Contra 4* to arrive, but its late 2007 release should give the developers time to polish an already smooth engine to perfection. ●

FAMILIAR TERRITORY

The elements that make up the *Contra* series

There are a number of elements that make *Contra* the classic 2D shooter that it is. First of all is the initial drop into the jungle via helicopter – with Rizer and/or Bean hanging from the chopper in true action-hero style. It's pure Eighties action movie stuff, but it's a tradition the series hasn't forgotten.

As if the game wasn't quite difficult enough, *Contra*'s vehicle sections see even more enemies and bullets heading your way, with plenty of flying foes to take out. The series' famous Spread Gun should do the trick here, as you can fire a burst of five bullets within a 45-degree angle to take out multiple bad guys in one go.

It just wouldn't be a *Contra* game without a post-apocalyptic wasteland lit up by an enormous chain reaction of explosions. And giant flying aliens trying to tear your limb from limb, of course. It has to be said that the twin-screened treatment seems to really suit the series, so we've got high hopes for this one.

The new grappling hook should allow you to escape some tight scrapes, as well as allowing for more complex level design

The sheer number of enemies that can swarm below you mean it's a real boon that you can shoot downwards to clear a path



HOW COMPLETE?

85%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

80%

Run. Gun. A ton of fun...

PSP

HANDS ON

Castlevania: The Dracula X Chronicles

A rare classic is reborn on PSP

So far, the DS has been the console of choice for *Castlevania* lovers, but PSP owners are due for a treat later in the year with the release of *The Dracula X Chronicles*, which brings one of the rarest titles in the series to the handheld.

Rondo of Blood was originally created for the Japanese PC Engine console and never actually made it to these shores. Well, not only does *Chronicles* contain an unlockable version of the original, but its main course is a completely reworked version of *Rondo* that's tailored to the PSP. Not only that, but served up as a tasty dessert is an emulated *Symphony of the Night*, available upon completion.

Those of you who remember *Symphony of the Night* (or those who've downloaded the game from the Xbox 360's Live Arcade) will know that it introduced the characters of Richter Belmont and Maria Renard. Well, that's not strictly true, as their first appearance was in *Rondo of Blood*, and fans of the series will be thrilled to find out a bit more about their background, as the game's set a few years before *SOTN*.

One of Richter's more effective attacks sees him hurling damage-causing Bible pages – well, they could give you a nasty paper cut...

It wouldn't be a *Castlevania* game without the hero wielding his trusty whip

"Rondo of Blood is more old school *Castlevania* than more recent titles"

Maria's Dragon Summon uses up a whopping 50 Heart Points, so it's best to only use it in the direst of situations

Big bird. Not, not that one.



Rondo of Blood is more old school *Castlevania* than the more exploration-based recent titles, so expect a relatively linear adventure compared with the likes of *Aria of Sorrow*, but with a total visual overhaul that really breathes new life into the game. With the team behind both DS titles working on the title – and you know how

excellent they both are – our hopes are very high for this one. At the very least, it's an opportunity for series completists to own two versions of a title that's so far eluded localisation, as well as *Symphony of the Night*, a handheld version of one of the finest games in the entire series. A definite purchase for retro lovers. ●

PSP

HGZine

Castlevania
The Dracula X Chronicles

HOW COMPLETE?

60%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

87%

This could well be another gaming gem for PSP

DS

HANDS ON

Glory Days 2

Action and strategy combine to help you kick enemy butt

Glory Days 2 is an original concept – if you're able to ignore the existence of *Glory Days 1* – that gives you a mixture of strategy game and hot side-scrolling 2D war action in one impressive package. You're in the hot seat. In fact, you're the commander of a whole army, given permission to do whatever it takes to keep your troops alive and victorious.

The game uses the DS's hardware perfectly, as there's not just some rubbish map on Screen Two here. Instead, the top screen shows you, your little man – on his feet, in an aeroplane, firing off missiles or doing whatever he has to do to survive – while the bottom screen is better described as your troop management section.

It's down here, with the buttons or stylus, that you look after the broader aspect of war. And it's here that the strategy element comes into play. You

"Glory Days 2 looks like being one of the Nintendo portable's summer holiday smashes"

have to secure bases, gather resources to build your desired military hardware, protect civilians and decide how best to spend your tour of duty. Only then do you get to do the fun blowing stuff up bits of the game.

Glory Days 2 is presented entirely in 2D, which is unusual for a strategy game. Your progress is shown via a bar at the top of the screen rather than any fancy maps, so once war kicks off, you simply watch the progress of your forces, while doing your individual best to fight alongside your men.

You soon start getting more advanced weaponry and skills, heading off ahead of the action in a chopper to take out ground troops, or hopping into a plane to neutralise enemy choppers before they bomb the hell out of your guys first. There's eight-player link-up war action in here as well, which, although only via local Wi-Fi, should be a decent enough war riot.

Strategy meets shoot 'em up.



A unique combination of blood, war and clever battle strategy, *Glory Days 2* looks like being one of the Nintendo portable's summer holiday smashes. ●



INCOMING! You may need to start manufacturing a new arse



Looks great. War's very pretty and nice some times



HOW COMPLETE?

90%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

90%

This is war with depth and has definite potential



SPECIAL REPORT

Portable Gold

Underestimate Sony's handheld at your peril. Here's why you really should own a PSP...

We here at HGZine love the PSP. Of course, being a handheld games mag we're going to be slightly biased, but it really is a cracking bit of kit. It's got some superb games, it looks the business, and if you're so inclined you can use it as a movie player, an MP3 player or as a way to display your digital photos.

Yet, for some reason the PSP is constantly overlooked by sections of the gaming press, with reviews of its software conspicuously low-key in most multi-format magazines and sites, while it seems to be heavily criticised in certain corners of the net.

So just why is the PSP the most underrated console around? We spoke to Phil Owen of Juice Games, lead programmer on forthcoming THQ title *Juiced: Hot Import Nights* and self-confessed PSP fan, to ask his opinions...

The PSP seems to get a bit of a bad press in general – why do you think that is?

I don't know to be honest. The criticisms levelled at the PSP – like the price, and quantity and quality of games – I feel are a tad unfair, especially



The PSP Slim And Lite will be out in Europe even before its Japanese release. Here's the new Ice Silver model in all its glory

when you hear the positive feedback from people who actually own a PSP.

Historically, the handheld market has been dominated by Nintendo. Because of this, when the PSP was released I think some thought it was doomed to failure, but that isn't the case at all.

What do you think are the PSP's greatest strengths are? And what about its weaknesses?

It's strengths are that it has a great screen, it's easy to develop for, is extremely powerful for such a small device and has great features – especially now with its interactivity with the PS3. The sound quality through the headphones is also great.

As for weaknesses, I think the analogue control nub could be better

and the sound quality from the built-in speakers could also be improved, but I think that is being pretty picky.

You're working on *Juiced* PSP at the moment, so what's the PSP like to code for?

Developing games for the PSP is great. It has some similarities with PS2 development and it's an advantage to have worked on the PS2 beforehand, but PS2 knowledge is not a necessity. Sony has been wise enough to provide an excellent framework on which games can be easily prototyped and then subsequently developed.

Do you think it was wise for Sony to finally allow the PSP's full power

"Being a handheld games mag we're going to be slightly biased, but it really is a cracking bit of kit"

to be used? Should they have let developers use the extra speed from the off?

Allowing developers to finally access the full power of the PSP is a really positive move in my opinion. It will allow us developers to produce even better quality games. Game designs will get bigger and brighter and graphics will get even better.

I think restricting the use of the extra speed from the off was a good move. There are always unknowns when a new console is released, but now the



> feature continued

PSP has firmly established itself, allowing the extra speed is a bonus.

Have you seen the new PSP yet? What do you think of the redesign – do you think Sony should have changed it more?

I haven't seen one in the flesh yet. Slimmer and lighter is a definite advantage. The addition of the video-



Travelling Light

The PSP goes on a crash diet

The new PSP Slim And Lite hasn't had as radical a redesign as some predicted, but it should hopefully sway those on the fence about whether to buy one. It's a third lighter than the original and is almost twenty per cent skinnier. Perhaps more importantly though, there's a couple of new features which make it an even more attractive purchase.

There's a new video out port, which allows you to display games and UMD movies on your TV, while an improved data storage feature lets the PSP temporarily save content from the UMD to the internal memory, reducing loading times greatly on some games. You can also now charge your PSP through a USB cable from a PS3 or PC.

The front of the console hasn't been altered, but there's a new colour (Ice Silver) as well as a Darth Vader design on a special version, released alongside the forthcoming *Star Wars Battlefront: Renegade Squadron*. Overall, they're small refinements but very welcome ones, with its reduced size instantly making it more comfortable. Nice one, Sony.

"If every console lives or dies on its games, then the PSP is in better health than many give it credit for"

out port is good as well, as are the improvements to loading times. It really is an interesting time for the PSP.

Finally, of its impressive library, which are your personal favourite games on the console?

The two *GTA* games (*Liberty City Stories* and *Vice City Stories*) and *LocoRoco* are my favourites.

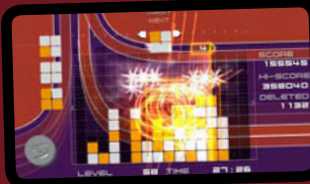
We're with Phil on this one, as the PSP is a great console with some brilliant software. Our box on the right shows five classics for Sony's handheld, but these aren't just great portable games – they'd be terrific on any format.

If every console lives or dies on its games, then the PSP is in better health than many give it credit for. Perhaps there's not been a single 'killer app' – that single game that sells systems on its own – but we'd argue that the PSP has a software library every bit as good as the DS's. In truth, we could have comfortably listed five times as many great games on our list, and we wouldn't have much of a dip in quality.

The naysayers may gripe, but the future looks pretty darned bright for PSP. Roll on September we say, when we can get our hands on the sleeker Slim And Lite for ourselves – and we'll bring you our considered opinion on the new hardware very soon. ●

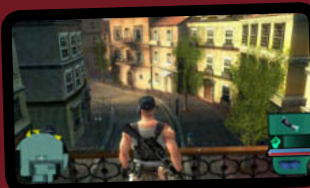
Buyer's Guide

If you're just picking up a PSP now, or you're holding out for a Slim And Lite in September, here are five of the very best games that you should be getting for some tip-top handheld fun...



1. Lumines

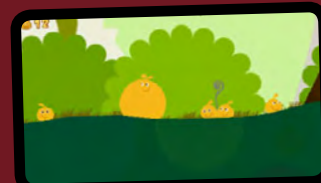
Tetsuya Mizuguchi's spellbinding fusion of block-matching and block-rocking beats is a bona fide modern masterpiece. With its hypnotic tunes, electric skins and addictive gameplay, this even bests its own sequel for sheer puzzling joy. Once you're playing it's incredibly tough to stop – an absolute must-have on PSP.



2. Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror

The original *Syphon Filter* on the PSOne was considered a poor relation to *Metal Gear Solid*, but developers Sony Bend

delivered a stealth-action gem for the series' debut on PSP. Every bit as good as Snake's portable bow, the thrill-packed story and exciting set-pieces make *Dark Mirror* the best third-person actioner on the handheld.



3. LocoRoco

Charm is an underrated commodity in modern gaming, but this cute blob-rolling adventure is absolutely full to bursting with it. With some of the most lovable lead characters in gaming bounding and singing their way through some brilliantly-designed levels, this quirky treat will have you smiling from beginning to end. It looks gorgeous, too.



4. Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops

Team Kojima does it again. Snake's first proper portable adventure (strategy-based *Acid* doesn't count) is every bit as good as his PS2 exploits. With revamped controls, cut-down cut-scenes and fast loading times, it's a perfect fit for portable play, while the soldier recruiting mechanic is a stroke of utter genius. And cracking multiplayer as well.



5. Daxter

It was a toss-up between this and *Gitaroo Man Lives*, but Ready At Dawn's platformer gets the nod for being an original title every bit as good as Naughty Dog's *Jak* games. It's full of magical moments, from movie pastiches to some great mini-game diversions. Terrific visuals and excellent controls are just the icing on a particularly tasty cake.

"Charm is an underrated commodity in modern gaming"



DS

The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass

It's a brand new (ooh-ar me) hearty Zelda adventure on DS...

There are many things that you're guaranteed will be perfect in a *Zelda* game, and the first is an epic opening – the sort of cliffhanging beginning that tantalises the player.

So many *Zelda* games on, it's incredible that the start of yet another vast quest can still inspire such an incredible feeling of adventure. Of wanting to jump on a horse and gallop across Hyrule field, or set sail to new and exciting lands.

If you've played a *Zelda* game before then you just know that ahead lies paths full of fascinating characters, hidden worlds and puzzle-packed dungeons, all fresh and undiscovered. And you know – because they've never failed

to deliver before – every area will be a mini-masterpiece in every respect.

Phantom menace?

If you haven't played a *Zelda* game before, then *Phantom Hourglass* is the perfect game to begin with.

While *Twilight Princess* on Wii uses that console's unique controller to immerse the player, it could be said that those controls are over-complicated. What the DS has done is make controlling Link so simple that you'll wonder how you ever managed to play *Zelda* on a handheld using a D-pad.

Leading Link around the screen is as easy as dragging the stylus, which makes him walk or run in that direction. Attacking single enemies with your sword is quickly done by tapping them, which unleashes a basic slash, while

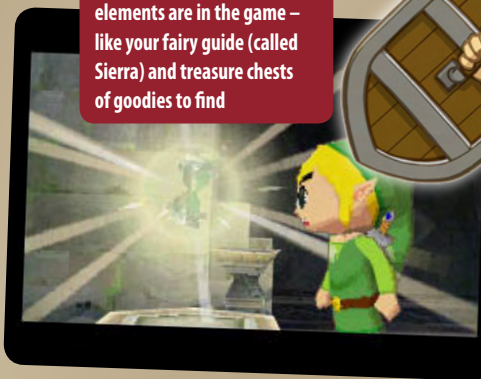
"If you've played a *Zelda* game before then you know what lies ahead"



All the traditional *Zelda* elements are in the game – like your fairy guide (called Sierra) and treasure chests of goodies to find

Link's new steamboat is faster and easier to navigate than *The Wind Waker's* sail boat. And you can even upgrade it with new parts

Zelda comes to the handheld. Lovely.



> Zelda continued

Link can also do the old spin-attack by circling around him – again with the stylus. A tutorial just isn't needed because the controls are so intuitive. You reach a box you want to move, instinctively tap it and directional arrows appear which you then tap to indicate which way you want to move it.

THE MISSING LINK

Filling in the gaps in Zelda's gameplay



1. Using the stylus

2. King's dungeon

3. Twice the fun

1. Using the stylus

Once you find them, items like arrows and bombs are simple to use and given a whole new lease of life with the DS stylus. This applies in particular to the boomerang, where you draw on the screen the path you want it to take. So now it will travel around corners, into enemies and obediently through lit flames without any of the multiple-targeting hell in previous games.

Along with new controls and the inevitable new dungeons – some familiar, some new – which contain ingeniously designed puzzles throughout every floor, there's the sailing... In concept this is very similar to *Wind Waker's*, but again the DS controls make it feel fresh and new.

World in action

As you find new parts of a sea map – which is like a map of the entire world you have to explore – you can sail to new islands on Link's freshly designed steamboat. This is done by drawing a line from where you are to any other island. The navigating is then done for you, leaving you free to take in the view, fire cannonballs at enemy pirate ships and jump the ship over obstacles.

You can't always expect a handheld game to deliver quite such an impact as its home console version. Handheld games are often initially more addictive and can afford to try out an original idea or two, but for atmosphere and epic-sized adventures, you wouldn't naturally turn to the DS.

But *Phantom Hourglass* proves that they can be done. That soundtrack is as spine-tingling as ever on DS, the scale of the game is huge and dungeons are the mind-boggling time takers they always have been.

It doesn't feel like elements have been sacrificed in the translation to DS – it's quite the opposite, and the game just plays even better for having two screens and touch controls. Drawing a path for your boomerang instead of using complex multiple-targeting is a

There are all sorts of wacky characters to talk to. Some will mark points of interest on your map, while others might ask for your help



joy, and so is being able to draw notes onto the map, like a proper explorer.

From epic opening, to island after island of brilliant adventuring, *Phantom Hourglass* is as near to perfect a game as you're likely to get on DS. Sadly though, us Europeans have at least a few months wait for the English language version – which is more than enough to make us sicker than Link sailing the choppy seas. ●

Kath Brice

"Phantom Hourglass is as near to perfect a game as you're likely to get on DS"



New in *Phantom Hourglass* is the way that Link must carry important quest items like boss keys and Triforce pieces over his head. Which means that he can't use items or weapons when he's holding them

Your boat will follow the path you've drawn for it automatically, although you can re-plot the route if you see something interesting that you want to check out

HGZine Verdict

Gaming on the DS really doesn't get much better than this

DS



Perfectly intuitive controls



Consistently brilliant puzzles



Some repetitive gameplay

10

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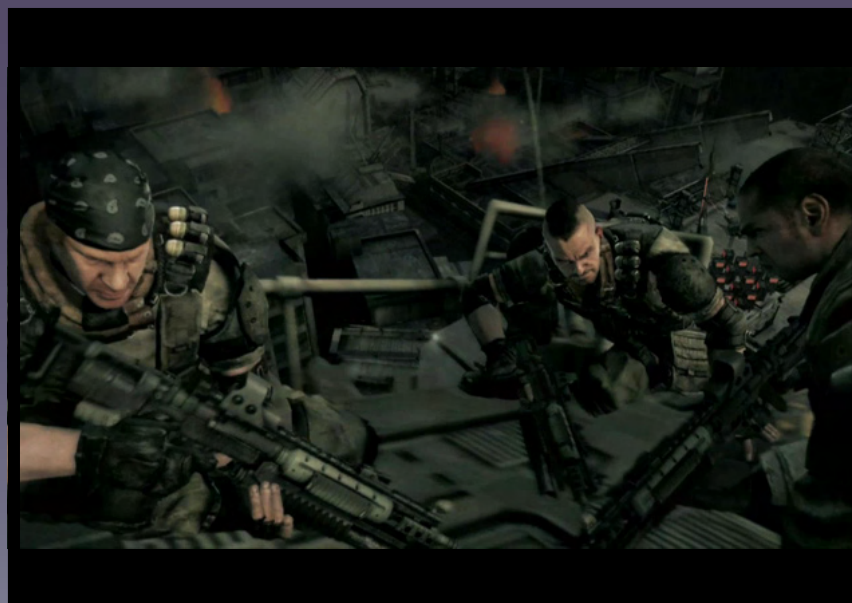
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PSP

Final Armada

One vehicle against a massive army? In a computer game? Surely not...

There's something very reassuring and comforting about *Final Armada*. Although, if asked, it would surely admit to not being the most groundbreaking, visually impressive or hardware-pushing game you'll see this year, it does have a certain amount of charm. And a portion of that charm comes from the fact that it's so darned familiar.

On one hand you can criticise a game for being generic, but we were really looking forward to bashing our

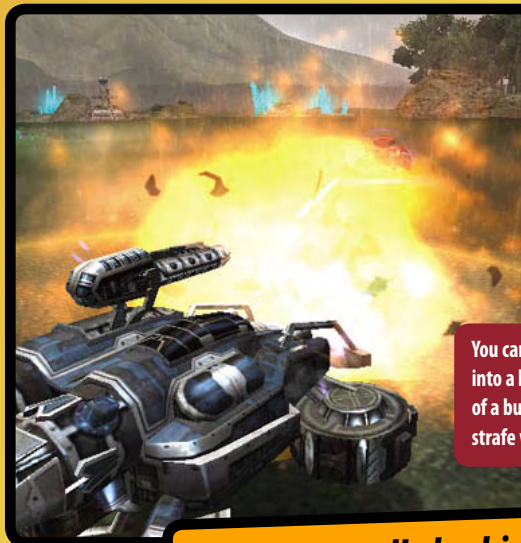
way through this vehicle-based shoot-'em-up, even though we've played countless ones before. So although we've swam through a seemingly never-ending sea of games that have a lone craft battling it out against insurmountable odds, weapons to power up and unpleasant bosses to defeat, *Final Armada*, somehow, managed to capture our attention.

Lost the plot

The plot is incidental, but it does begin with you on an alien planet trying to restore some stability. You're controlling a weapon-packed buggy and you're also able to call in the support of your airborne wingman when things get especially hairy. Which they do remarkably quickly. You've seen it all before countless times, but zipping around the alien terrain, targeting enemy ships and firing off guided missiles towards lumbering tanks proves to be hugely enjoyable.

One glaring fault with the game is the control system though, as using the Triangle button to move forward and

Destroy your enemies and they're kind enough to leave power-ups for you to collect



You can change your buggy into a hovercraft at the flick of a button, enabling you to strafe when you're attacking

"We were really looking forward to bashing our way through *Final Armada*"

the Cross one to reverse just feels clumsy. Aside from that, controlling the air support with the D-pad and a series of clear icons works absolutely fine when you're in the heat of battle.

While *Final Armada* is unlikely to be the number one choice of game for you this month, it is still a game that manages to be playable and enjoyable, and is certainly worth a second glance if you're feeling particularly flush. ●

Dean Mortlock



The ground forces can cause some serious damage. And did we mention the massive flying gunships?

HGZine
Verdict

Nothing very original, but what it does it does pretty well

PSP



Some cracking battles



Plenty of bonus weapons



Not much originality

7

A WING AND A PRAYER

Need some cover? Then call in your wingman

The delightful Jenna 'pilots' the computer-controlled ship buzzing around you during the game and there's a definite strategy to planning the best times to send her in. Using the D-pad, you can simply press Up and she flies off to attack whatever enemy is currently targeted – giving you the opportunity to sit back, relax and enjoy the fireworks.



DS

Dead 'n' Furious

One high security prison, an army of flesh-eating zombies and just a stylus for protection? You'd be furious, too

Publisher: Koch Media
Developer: Dream On Studio

Heritage: Handheld specialist also responsible for GBA game *Mr Nutz*

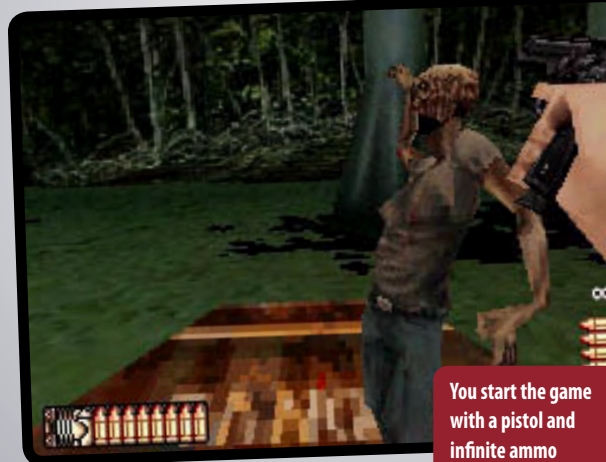
Link: www.deadnfurious.com
ETA: 14 September

What a title. Direct, lean, to the point and no messing around with colons. Also there's no mistaking what *Dead 'n' Furious* is a reference to – gaming's canon fodder of choice... zombies!

This time the flesh-eating undead are spreading their particular brand of terror around a high security prison, where our inmate hero finds himself liberated from his cell but alone and in danger of getting his head ripped off.

Just like the title, the action in *Dead 'n' Furious* is equally direct and to the point, as it takes the form of an on-rail shooter very much in the mould of the arcade classic *House of Dead*, but with

There's a two-player co-op mode that uses the wireless connection



You start the game with a pistol and infinite ammo

the stylus and touchscreen replacing the lightgun. So far, so good.

Dead and buried

While the idea of just tapping on the screen to accurately deliver a bullet may seem far too easy, the speed and erratic movements of the zombies makes it a real challenge. More importantly, you're forced to reload by dragging the stylus across the screen, filling the gun's clip from the ammo supply. Take too long and you'll receive a vicious slap across the face.

It's because of the simplicity of the gameplay that it's easy to be impressed by *Dead 'n' Furious*' appetite for gunplay

and gore, as you're just straight in there with headshots aplenty and with only the odd choice of direction demanding any use of your brain.

The trouble is that what initially seems fresh and fun quickly becomes predictable and dull due to the constant repetition. Also because of the simple graphics, *Dead 'n' Furious* can't even astound you with new and interesting monsters to fight.

Of course all arcadey games tend to lack substance, but *Dead 'n' Furious* feels particularly flimsy and lightweight, as it sadly fails to build any momentum from its impressive opening.

Dave Harrison

Those quite graphic pictures of hearts represent your health, which will take constant beating

"What initially seems fresh and fun quickly becomes predictable"

IN YOUR FACE

Up close and personal...

Dead 'n' Furious has one main scare tactic and that's to swing the camera around swiftly to reveal several zombies crowding your personal space, allowing you hardly any time to reload. Initially it's pretty effective but sadly it quickly becomes tiresome.



HGZine
Verdict

Daft and fun shooter but sadly lacking any real substance

DS

- Accessible
- Scruffy to look at
- Very repetitive

6

GBA

Drill Dozer

Mining a rich seam of gaming gold

Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Game Freak
Heritage: Pokemon series
Link: www.drilldozer.com/final
ETA: Out now (US)

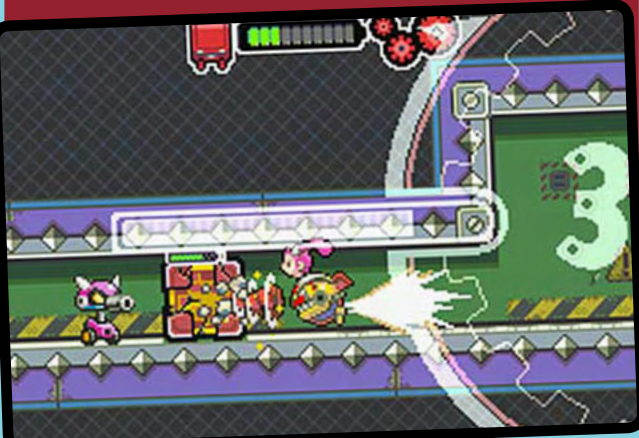
Just as you thought the trusty GBA had had its day, a gem is released to breathe life back into the format (although DS owners will be able to play it via the GBA cart socket, of course). *Drill Dozer* is one of the most addictive games we've played in months, and don't be put off by the cute looks as it's got a genius level of cleverness beneath its bubblegum appearance.

In this fantasy world you play Jill, the leader of a group of rogues who go around salvaging treasure from tombs and underwater wrecks with specialised

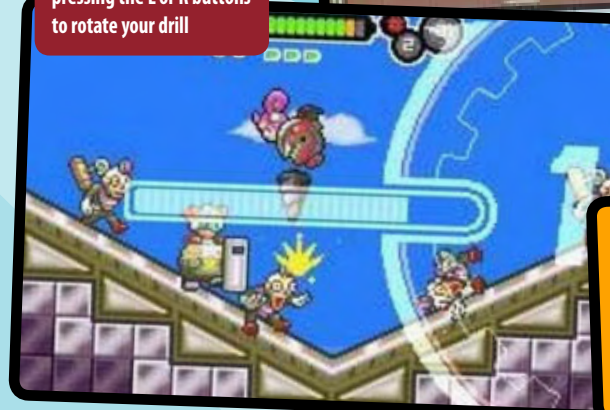
SOLID METAL GEARS

You know the drill by now...

Getting gear upgrades is vital if you want to find some of the hard to reach places in the game. Once collected, you can begin drilling into some of the tougher objects and, brilliantly, you can tell when you need to move up a gear by the whine of the drill and the amount of feedback coming through the cart's rumble pack.



Moving around levels is simply achieved by pressing the L or R buttons to rotate your drill



The bosses in the game can be tough, but with the right gears should crumble to dust

"Drill Dozer is one of the most addictive games we've played in months"

drilling vehicles. On this quest you're tasked with recovering the ultimate treasure, the Red Diamond, from an evil crime syndicate known as the Skulkers.

Shake, rattle and roll

What's immediately appealing about the game is the fantastic rumble facility (which comes inside the cart), adding loads of feedback to your drilling antics. Different degrees of vibration can be felt as you're biting into the various surfaces, and almost every feature in the game can be plugged to unlock treasure or progress to new sections.

You orient your drill by pressing the L or R button, though added depth is

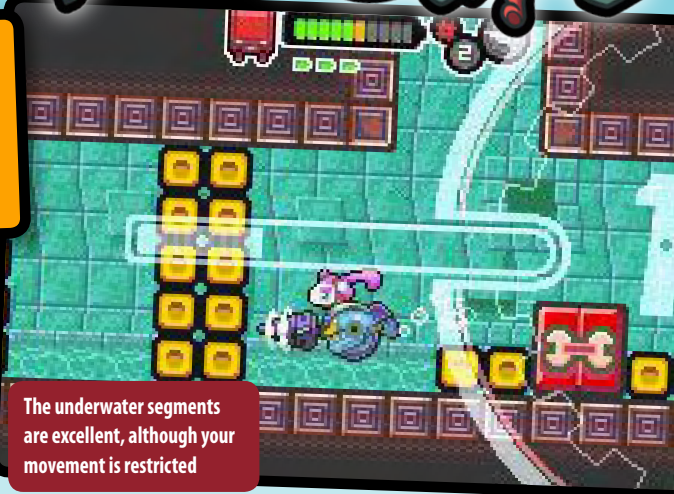
brought to the experience when you find cogs around the levels to boost your machine. There are plenty of puzzles too, as *Drill Dozer* is as much about lateral thinking as quick reflexes as you discover combinations for vault doors or use the environment to propel yourself to higher locations.

The levels cascade with puzzle possibilities, and because of *Drill Dozer's* innovative core mechanic, it never gets tiresome. And the best thing of all? Although it's not out in the UK yet, you can buy it from www.gamestop.com for \$14.99. That's a mere £8 for currency conversion fans. ●

Mark Walbank



The underwater segments are excellent, although your movement is restricted



HGZine Verdict This is the most addictive 2D game we've seen for years. Fact

GBA

- 👍 Glorious levels
- 👍 Rumble feedback
- 👍 Appealing visuals

9

PSP

Tales of the World: Radiant Mythology

A games that's better described as glowing rather than glorious

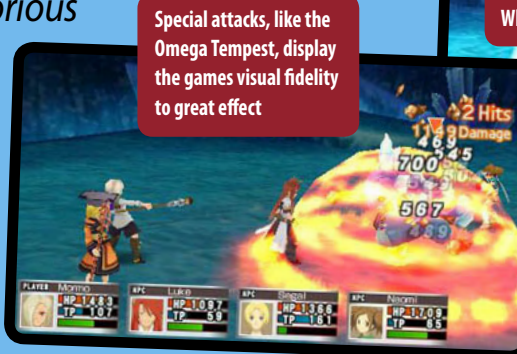
Although the *Tales* series is generally considered to be a poor man's *Final Fantasy*, the games have gathered a legion of fans over the last decade. This is the first *Tales* game on PSP and plays like a medley with spells, characters and locations plucked from previous games and stirred into one melting pot.

But *Radiant Mythology* does have one new hook: you get to create your hero from the ground up – including gender, hair style and even voice intonation – which does add a personal touch. Okay, so this isn't a wildly original idea but you can swap items with friends via the PSP's Ad-hoc mode, which is another first for the series.

Mechanical breakdown

In terms of RPG mechanics this is as traditional as they come, with skill upgrades, random battles and over 300 assigned missions. But if there's one major criticism of *Radiant Mythology* it's that the storyline plods along at an uneven pace, with far too many fetch quests in-between significant events.

Of greater interest is the combat, which is based around Namco's ridiculously named Flex Range Linear Motion Battle System. We have no idea



Special attacks, like the Omega Tempest, display the games visual fidelity to great effect



This cosmic pirate look will be doing the catwalks next season, just wait and see



An ice level in an RPG? Who'd have thought it



The world map is beautifully drawn, but don't be deceived by the fairytale look as this is a tough game

BLAST FROM THE PAST

How to build your fame

Other famous *Tales* characters will eventually help you on quests but they will take some persuading. Cleverly, you can build up 'Fame' points from beating dungeons, completing missions and generally getting your name noticed around the towns. Build up enough fame and the likes of Stahn Aileron (from *Tales of Destiny*), Lloyd Irving (from *Tales of Symphonia*), and Luke fon Fabre (from *Tales of the Abyss*) will wisecrack their way into your party.

"Everything is beautifully animated, with some superb visual effects"

what this means either, but in game terms it allows you to change your party's strategy on the fly, move characters around in real-time and unleash devastating combos known as Artes. Everything is beautifully animated with some superb visual effects, and the battles are definitely the game's saving grace.

So if you're looking for a solid RPG with great characters and enjoyable combat then *Radiant Mythology* will fill your flagon, it's just a pity things occasionally get bogged down with dull errand quests. *Radiant Mythology* is out now in the US and available from your friendly game importer. ●

Mark Walbank

HGZine
Verdict

The best RPG on PSP, despite the odd dull mission or two

PSP

- 👍 Tense combat
- 👍 Amusing cut-scenes
- 👎 Dull missions

7

PCGZine

GEARS OF WAR PREVIEW

The Xbox 360 Epic comes to PC

ASSASSIN'S CREED PREVIEW

Read it, watch the video, want the game

HELLGATE LONDON PREVIEW

Stunning RPG-cum-FPS game

GHOST RECON 2 REVIEW

The console smash arrives on PC



PCGZine Issue 8

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The cover of PCGZine Issue 8, dated August 2007. The main title 'PCGZine' is in large blue and purple letters. Below it, the tagline 'Free Magazine For PC Gamers. Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates...' is displayed. The cover features several game-related images and headlines. A large headline for 'Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2' is prominent, with the sub-headline 'The fighting men of the future revealed'. Another headline for 'HELLGATE LONDON' is visible, with the sub-headline 'Diablo meets Deus in a dodgy Tube station'. A 'DEFINITIVE REVIEW INSIDE!' badge is also present. On the right side, there is a 'FIRST LOOK!' badge for 'Company of Heroes: Opposing Fronts' with the sub-headline 'First add-on for the WWII strategy smash'. At the bottom right, there is a 'Gears of War' preview with the sub-headline 'Epic's magnificent shooter comes to the PC at last'. The cover also includes a 'FREE!' badge with a mouse icon, a 'WWW.GAMERZINES.COM' URL, and an 'EMAIL THIS MAGAZINE TO A FRIEND' button. Navigation links for 'Click Here -> Cover | Contents | Prev' are at the top right. A search bar and navigation controls are at the bottom.



"Crush is both mind-bending and also frighteningly addictive"

REVIEW ROUND-UP PSP

Shrek The Third

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Amaze Entertainment

Unlike the DS version (which was reviewed last month) this PSP iteration is more akin to *God of War*, only with a bit less blood, cute characters and irritating gameplay.

The action is viewed from a third-person perspective and you generally amble around a series of bland-looking stages, pummelling enemies with weak combos and poor animation in a bid to rescue Donkey, who's been turned into a parfait (don't ask). It's your typical licensed shovelware which should be avoided, even if you are a hopeless fan of the film.



- 👍 Wisecracking script
- 👎 Weak combat
- 👎 Boring level design

Run far far away

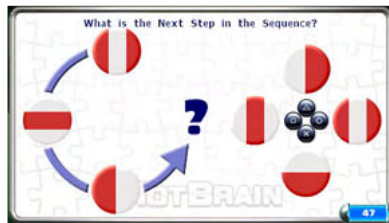
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Hot Brain

Publisher: Midway | **Developer:** Midway

Cynics may say that this is Midway's attempt to cash in on the *Brain Training* phenomenon, and they'd be dead right – probably because they're brainy cynics, too. And although it lacks some of the charm and finesse of Nintendo's best-selling franchise, this is still an engaging enough package to warrant some attention.

The tasks include disciplines in logic, memory, language, math and concentration, and while it can feel a bit more like an IQ test than serious fun, getting your brain 'hotter' is pretty compulsive. Our only quibble is that after a few hours we noticed that some of the questions start coming up again.



- 👍 Compulsive at first
- 👎 Lacks variety
- 👎 Questions repeat

More like luke warm

6

Tony Hawk's Project 8

Publisher: Activision | **Developer:** Page 44 Studios

Project 8 seemed to sneak out on PSP with hardly a fanfare, which is a shame because it's easily one of the best and most comprehensive games on the format, and definitely one of the best games of the whole *Tony Hawk's* series.

Although the controls have been simplified for the PSP it still retains a great deal of depth, including the levels, characters, movies and Nail-A-Trick and Focus modes from the PS2 version. Everything feels finely honed and well engineered, and after a short adjustment you'll soon be nailing those 50,000-plus combos. Superb.



- 👍 Wicked levels
- 👍 Great movies
- 👍 Compulsive goals

Hawk reaches yet new heights

8

Cube

Publisher: D3 Publisher | **Developer:** Metia Interactive

It's almost certainly fair to say that *Cube* is one of those puzzle games that probably triggers the part of your brain that's normally used exclusively for crossword puzzles and navigating your way through garden mazes, and as such it's only going to appeal to a minority of people. *Brain Training* it is not.

The idea behind the game is to rotate a cube through ever more complex labyrinths before it explodes, but spikes, bombs, arrow triggers and barriers complicate matters. It has excellent chilled-out music designed, we're sure, to calm your nerves as you play the game, but unfortunately the levels being to feel similar very soon.



- 👍 Stimulating
- 👎 An acquired taste
- 👎 Repetitive puzzles

One point for every side

6

Recommended PSP Releases

Recent stuff you should try

Zenoku (Eidos)

Imagine Sudoku with ninjas instead of numbers.

Crush (Sega)

A mind-bending puzzler that's in both 2D and 3D.

Smash Court Tennis 3 (Namco Bandai)

Takes even *Virtua Tennis* into a last set decider.

Ultimate Ghosts 'n' Goblins (Capcom)

A resurrected franchise complete with zombies and boxer shorts.



PaRappa the Rapper (Sony)

At £20 this rhythm-action classic is a sweet investment.

REVIEW ROUND-UP

DS

Osu! Tatakae! Ouendan 2



Publisher: Nintendo | Developer: Inis

Firstly, it's very important that you aren't put off by the strange name, as this is the sequel to the J-Pop-inspired rhythm-action title recently released under the name of *Elite Beat Agents*. Although it's currently only available in Japan, the comic book story and accessible mechanics means it can be enjoyed by people the world over.

Once again, the idea is to solve very human problems through the power of dance, and it's every bit as lively and thoroughly entertaining as the original was. It will be released over here eventually, but probably with a range of blander tunes.



- Foot-tapping tunes throughout
- Quirky humour that's genuinely funny
- There's obviously some Japanese text

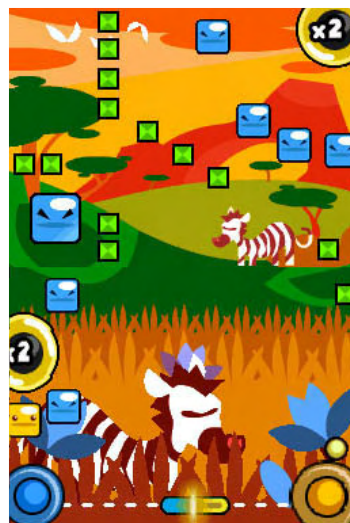
J-Pop... you can't stop

9

Nervous Brickdown

Publisher: Eidos | Developer: Arkedo Studio

Since the year dot, bat-and-ball games have been a mainstay of gaming, tracing a line from *Pong* right through to *Arkanoid* – and with uncountable clones and poor imitations along the way. This latest variation uses the same gameplay principle of keeping a ball in the play area with a paddle but at least it does it with great imagination. The 135 levels include space ships,



haunted houses and crocodiles, and for a few hours you'll definitely be entertained. Problem is though, the format itself is very tired and even with all the extra charm and colour, it'll soon begin to wane.

- Imaginative design on a classic theme
- Limited mechanic soon leads to boredom
- Cheesy music that quickly begins to irritate

The title says it all

5

Touch Darts

Publisher: Sega | Developer: Sega

Although it's very easy to be immediately put off by a darts game that sports cartoon visuals and over-the-top characters, *Touch Darts* has a refined and beautifully honed throwing mechanic at its heart that lifts it high above the usual pub game fare that you'll find on DS.

Along with the more regular 501 and 301 dart tournaments there are some amusing dart variants and mini-games to play through, giving *Touch Darts* a perfect pick-up-and-play feel. It also has



adaptive AI and wireless play, so there's guaranteed to be a challenging opponent out there for everyone.

Touch Darts is an unusual but deeply addictive and welcome addition to the sports cannon.

- Varied modes add to the gameplay
- Excellent and intuitive controls
- Cartoon characters work surprisingly well

Get ready to cry '180!'

8

"Once again, the idea is to solve very human problems through the power of dance"



Recommended DS Releases

Recent unmissable goodies

Elite Beat Agents (Nintendo)

The best rhythm-action game on DS bar none – and the sequel is reviewed over on the left.

SimCity DS (EA)

Do your duty and build a city with a great sewage system.

Spider-Man 3 (Activision)

Does whatever a spider can, and jolly well, too.

Pokemon: Diamond/Pearl (Nintendo)

Gotta catch 'em all (yet again) in this superb RPG.

Trauma Centre: Under the Knife (Atlus)

Better than *Operation* but without the flashing red nose.



MOBILE REVIEWS

All the latest from the world of mobile phone gaming



Playman Extreme Running

Publisher: RealArcade

Parkour is the urban sport that involves people throwing themselves across rooftops. While *Playman Extreme Running* looks a little basic, it captures the spirit of the 'sport' with fluid animation, fantastic controls and 12 glorious levels designed for both multiplayer and trick play.

- Great environments
- Superb animation
- Speedily addictive

Will have you jumping for joy

8

Lego Brick Breaker

Publisher: Hands on Mobile

Bat-and-ball games are staple fare for mobiles so it's difficult to get excited about another one. However, *Lego Brick Breaker* does at least have a storyline about a king imprisoning his subjects behind castle walls – break through these structures and you free the grateful citizens.

This is passable stuff but certainly nothing that you haven't played before.



- Cute story
- Samey levels
- Nothing original

Solid as bricks and mortar

6



Resident Evil: The Missions

Publisher: Capcom

In terms of raw game mechanics, this is as simple as they come – you move your crosshair around the screen and shoot. It's not unlike Whack-a-Mole only with flesh-eating zombies. Yet there are several cool features which elevate it above your usual FPS fare, including a torch to illuminate environments, escort, survival and hostage missions plus fantastic weapons that add great tactical nuance to the action.

It's all done with Capcom's inimitable panache and is guaranteed to give you the creeps, even at the bus stop.

- Creepy enemies
- Tactical nuance
- 50 levels

A masterful monster mash

8

Tamagotchi Angel

Publisher: Namco Mobile

If you missed out on the Tamagotchi craze from a few years ago then here's a new version for mobile handsets.

The idea is to raise your virtual pet – which now comes complete with angel wings, hence the title of the game – by feeding it, playing with it and, erm, well, that's it.

Unfortunately, *Tamagotchi Angel* has failed to keep up with the times and while there are one or two mini-games, they are about as interesting as staring at an Artexed ceiling. A pointless piece of software that's likely to last about as long as the tedious virtual pet craze that it's spawned from.



- Limited gameplay
- Lacks charm
- Stuck in the past

Pets cemetery

3



RECOMMENDED
Four mobile games you must own

Stuntman Ignition

(Atari)

Fun and varied vehicular mayhem.

Minigolf Revolution:

Pirate Park (Gameloft)

Lots of yo ho ho in this terrific minigolf sim.

Tomb Raider

Legend 3D (Eidos)

Lara's latest mobile adventure is a cracker.

My Hangman

(Glu)
Excellent wordplay executed brilliantly.



Pyramid Bloxx

Publisher: Digital Chocolate

This is the sequel to *Tower Bloxx*, one of the best mobile games around, and is every bit as addictive as the original.

On the surface the game seems to be pretty simple stuff: by pressing the '5' key your Egyptian construction worker throws bricks up to a waiting workmate who then begins to form impressive temples and pyramids, but timing and strategy are vital.

The sound effects are crisp, the visuals extremely attractive and the pace gets furious very quickly, which makes it an addictive proposition. One to tell your mummy about.

- Intuitive controls
- Atmospheric environments
- Deep and rewarding

The pinnacle of mobile gaming

9



360Zine Issue 9 Out Now

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INSIDE ISSUE 9

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 4

Now with bikes! Read the hands-on preview and see the latest screens only in this mag!

MASS EFFECT PREVIEW

Bioware's Xbox 360 epic is about to be unleashed. We play it and report back.

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The RTS that's a FPS comes to the Xbox 360

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I'VE SEEN SHOTS OF THE NEW PSP BUT it doesn't look any different than the old one. Is it worth me selling my PSP on something like eBay and buying this new one? I'm pretty confused.

> **David Lee, Swansea**

> The PSP 'Lite' is basically the same old PSP but slightly thinner, significantly lighter and with a video-out port to allow you to play games and watch films from your PSP onto your TV. The new PSP also temporarily stores data on inbuilt memory, which should go some way to improving its dreadful loading times for games.

It's a slight evolution rather than a full-on revolution, but our personal opinion is that the PSP was nearly perfect as it was, so very little needed to change. For the full low-down on the new PSP though, turn to page 26 where we reveal all.

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE MAG. I'VE been downloading it for a few months now after I managed to find a link to it when I was on Google, and it's really, really good. I can't believe it's free, too.

As good as it is though, I reckon that I can think of a few things that'd make it even better. What about a tips section for example? Then it would be perfect.

> **Samuel Cavender, Kings Lynn**

> Thanks for the kind words, and we're pleased you like the magazine, Samuel. We're always striving to make HGZine even better and we'll definitely be adding some exciting new sections to the mag over the next few months, so watch this space.

HI, EXCELLENT MAGAZINE. ARE THERE any point-and-click games coming out for the DS? I loved this genre on the PlayStation, especially *Discworld*, and surely the DS's touchscreen capabilities would be ideal for this type of game?

> **Bradd, via email**

> There's a superb Japanese point-and-click adventure called *Professor Layton and the Mysterious Village*. It's out in America at the end of the year, and we'll let you know if a UK release date's announced.

There's also *Another Code*, which was released in 2005 and the film



The redesigned PSP is thinner, lighter and comes with some important new features, too

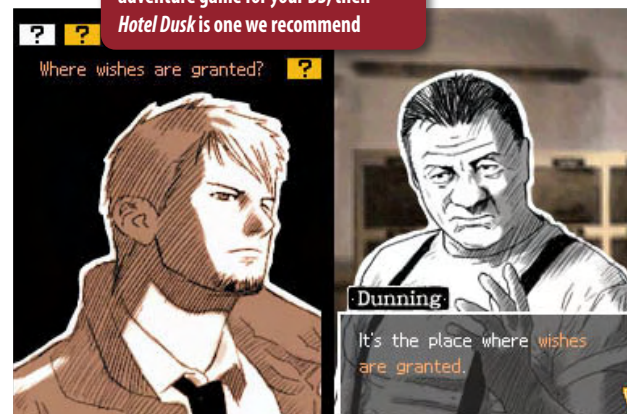
noir-influenced *Hotel Dusk: Room 215* that came out in April this year, both of which should fit the bill.

THIS IS A GREAT ONLINE MAG. IT'S MY first read but it will not be my last. The reviews are very in-depth and provide more info than many other games mags. The overall gaming information provided is excellent so keep doing what you do as it's great.

> **Daz Carmen, via email**

> Glad you like it, Daz. Honestly, letters like yours make the late hours and endless playing of the latest games worthwhile. It's a dirty job, but someone's got to do it...

If you're looking for a slightly different adventure game for your DS, then *Hotel Dusk* is one we recommend



GAME MATTERS

Your thoughts on the games you really want to play...

GREAT MAGS, AND I SUBSCRIBE TO most of them. Do you have any news on the possible *Oblivion* game for the PSP?

> **Dawn Dixon, via email**

> Hi Dawn. *Oblivion* (or *The Elder Scrolls Travels: Oblivion* to give it its full name) was originally announced last year and nothing's been heard of the game since. After a bit of detective work though, we believe that the game is still going to happen. It's currently got a release date of Quarter 4 (October to December) in the US and TBA in the UK.

I'M LOOKING FOR A DECENT platformer on the PSP, but why isn't there anything like *Mario*?

> **Lee Berryman, via email**

> There's nothing quite like *Mario*, but recent PSP releases like *Daxter* and *Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters* are both excellent.

I WANT A FOOTBALL GAME FOR my PSP, but can't decide between *FIFA* and *Pro Evo*. Which one's best?

> **Andy Parker, Bridport**

> We reckon that *PES* has slightly better gameplay, but *FIFA* is catching up fast.

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